

Figure 9 shows the processing operations performed in this embodiment when a third-party apparatus wishes to view the 3D computer model of the subject object stored on processing apparatus 2,4 or 6 but the third-party apparatus cannot perform processing to receive and process data defining the 3D computer model.

Referring to Figure 9, at step S9-2, the third-party apparatus sends a signal to the processing apparatus 2,4 or 6 storing the data defining the 3D computer model requesting an image of the 3D computer model.

At step S9-4, the processing apparatus 2, 4 or 6 storing the data defining the 3D computer model logs the request from the third-party apparatus.

At step S9-6, image data for transmission to the third-party apparatus is generated by rendering the 3D computer model in accordance with the viewing parameters previously generated by view parameter calculator 44 at step S4-40. In this way, the image generated shows the part of the subject object previously arranged by the user at the customer processing apparatus 2,4 to face the front marker 170 on the photographic mat. Consequently, the content of the first image is determined by the user

at the customer processing apparatus 2,4 (more particularly, by the way the user arranges the subject object relative to the pattern of features on the photographic mat).

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At step S9-8, the image data generated at step S9-6 is transmitted to the third-party apparatus, and at step S9-10, the third-party apparatus receives and displays the image data.

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At step S9-12, the third-party processing apparatus receives instructions input by the user thereof defining changes to the position and/or orientation of the object and/or changes to the viewing conditions (the position, orientation, zoom of the viewing camera), and at step S9-14 transmits the user instructions to the processing apparatus 2,4 or 6 storing the data defining the 3D computer model.

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At step S9-16, the processing apparatus 2, 4 or 6 storing the data defining the 3D computer model generates data defining a further image by rendering the 3D computer model in accordance with the received user instructions.

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At step S9-18, the image data generated at step S9-16 is

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transmitted to the third-party apparatus, and at step S9-20, the third-party apparatus receives and displays the image data.

5 Steps S9-12 to S9-20 are repeated as the user inputs further instructions to view the 3D computer model under different conditions.

10 In the first embodiment described above, at step S4-40, view parameter calculator 44 generates data defining a viewing camera for the 3D computer model so that each time the 3D computer model is viewed, the first image is generated by rendering the 3D computer model using the defined camera.

15 However, view parameter calculator 44 and the processing at step S4-40 may be omitted while still allowing the user at a customer processing apparatus 2,4 to align the subject object 210 with the front marker 170 on the
20 photographic mat so that the part of the subject object 210 facing the front marker 170 appears in the first image each time the 3D computer model is viewed. This will be explained below in detail in the second embodiment.